

SENATE BILL 2277

By Ford, O.

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 33, to create a pilot project concerning community based mental health and substance abuse care systems in certain counties. This act makes appropriation for \$1,500,000.00 for the 2007-2008 fiscal year to fund the pilot project.

WHEREAS, while TennCare and Shelby County are providing mental health care through a community based mental health and substance abuse care system, more care is needed for the number of citizens seeking such care; and

WHEREAS, the statewide TennCare Partners health plan to serve the mentally ill does not serve the best interests of recipients in Memphis/Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, estimates indicate 12,000 seriously mentally ill children, adolescents and adults living in Shelby County need mental health care, but are not seeking services; and

WHEREAS, eighty-one percent (81%) of Shelby County's 235,000 TennCare enrollees are African American; and

WHEREAS, the government of Shelby County is requesting additional state aid to fund special projects to transform their community based mental health and substance abuse care systems to make them more culturally competent; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 33, Chapter 1, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

Section 33-1-1____.

(a) The department of mental health and developmental disabilities shall establish and implement a pilot project in any county having a charter form of government which has a population in excess of eight hundred thousand (800,000)

according to the 2000 federal census or any subsequent federal census. The pilot project shall be established to enable the government of such county to:

- (1) Provide information to the African-American community to improve understandings of mental illness, stigma and treatment options;
- (2) Partner with local African-American pastors to 'get the message out';
- (3) Supervise provision of counseling and other support services in black churches;
- (4) Employ and train indigenous 'community navigators' to conduct outreach efforts;
- (5) Implement pilot projects to integrate primary care and behavioral health services;
- (6) Improve the care continuum for high-risk youth in the city school system operating in such county; and
- (7) Provide linkages to the county juvenile and criminal justice systems.

(b) To fund such pilot project for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, there is appropriated to the department of mental health and developmental disabilities the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000).

(c) The department is authorized to promulgate necessary rules and regulations in accordance with the uniform administrative procedures act, title 4, chapter 5, to implement the provisions of this act.

SECTION 2. For purposes of promulgating rules and regulations to implement this act, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect July 1, 2007, the public welfare requiring.